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Items 34, 35, 85, and 86
of the preliminary list*
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY
FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO
INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING
THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE
AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 13 July 1993 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Following up on my letter, dated 6 July 1993 (A/48/253-S/26045), concerning the report by the human rights group Middle East Watch, which affirmed that the Israeli army, through the use of undercover units, is pursuing a policy of summary executions of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, I should like to bring to your attention the findings of Amnesty International in its 1993 annual report on human rights. Amnesty International reported that, among the many human rights violations committed by Israel, "at least 120 Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli forces, often in circumstances suggesting extrajudicial executions or other unjustifiable killings". The figure of 120 for the total amount of those killed by undercover units represents one of the more conservative tallies prepared by human rights organizations. Some groups, such as Al-Haq and Palestine Human Rights Campaign (PHRC), have arrived at figures as high as 160 killings, with many of the victims 16 years of age or younger.

This pattern of undercover killings of Palestinians has, according to Middle East Watch, also been accompanied by the use of a new tactic against "wanted" Palestinian activists, namely that of "sealing off and emptying neighbourhoods in which suspects are thought to be hiding and, if they fail to come out and surrender, attacking the suspected hideout from a distance, using

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* A/48/50.

rockets, launched grenades, machine guns and other heavy artillery". Such actions have caused the destruction and damage of over 100 homes and have left hundreds of Palestinians homeless.

Amnesty International's report details several other human rights violations committed by Israel against the Palestinians, which include the systematic torture and ill-treatment of Palestinians under interrogation, the detention of Palestinians without charge or trial and the deportation of Palestinians from the occupied territory. According to the report, "Palestinian detainees continued to be systematically tortured or ill-treated mostly during interrogation. Methods included beatings, hooding with dirty sacks, sleep deprivation, and confinement in small dark cells known as 'closets' or, when cold, 'refrigerators'". It has been reported that three Palestinians died in detention, and a fourth Palestinian died shortly after interrogation. Additionally, with regard to the Israeli practice of deportation, Amnesty International called for the immediate return of the Palestinian deported to southern Lebanon in December 1992.

Israel's widespread policies and practices of continued repression, administrative detention, torture, killing, home demolition and deportation are all gross violations of international law and of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, which applies to all of the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel in 1967, including Jerusalem. We, therefore, once again reiterate our call for the Security Council to carry out the required measures to bring a halt to these violations and illegal activities and to provide international protection for the Palestinian people living under occupation, in accordance with Security Council resolution 681 (1990) and as expressed in the report of the Secretary-General of 25 January 1993 to the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 34, 35, 85 and 86 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nasser AL-KIDWA
Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations